

Message Text

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E. O. 11652: N/ A

TAGS: PINT CI

SUBJ: FREI AND PARETO TO PRESIDE OVER SENATE AND CHAMBER

1. SUMMARY. AS EXPECTED, PDCERS FREI AND PARETO WERE ELECTED PRESIDENTS OF RESPECTIVE HOUSES. FREIS SELECTION IMPLIES MORE EXPLICIT LEADERSHIP ROLE THAN IN PAST, ALTHOUGH ONE OF REASONS FOR PDC' S DECISION TO PROPOSE HIM WAS DESIRE USE PRESTIGE OF SENATE PRESIDENCY TO SHELTER EX- PRESIDENT FROM USUAL PARLIAMENTARY ROUGH- HOUSING. END SUMMARY.

2. OPPOSITION MAJORITY IN NEWLY CONSTITUTED SENATE MAY 23 ELECTED FORMER PRES EDUARDO FREI AS SENATE PRESIDENT, REPLACING FELLOW PDCER IGNACIO PALMA WHO RETIRED FROM SENATE. PIR' S HUMBERTO AGUIRRE DOOLAN REELECTED VP. TO SURPRISE OF SOME, FREI RECEIVED FORMAL CONGRATUALATIONS FROM PCCH, IC AND USOPO SENATORS.

3. CHAMBER OF DEPS ELECTION SAME DAY ALSO HEWED TO AGREED SCRIPT. FORMER PDC WHIP LUIS PARETO, AGRESSIVE UP BETE NOIRE, REPLACED PDC COLLEAGUE FERNANDO SANHUEZA IN PRESIDENCY. FIRST VP WENT TO PN' S GUSTAVO LORCA, 2 ND VP TO ROBERTO MUNOZ BARRA, PIR' S LOND DEPUTY. BOTH REPLACED PDCERS. WITH FEW EXCEPTIONS, VOTE FOLLOWED OPPOSITION- GOVT LINES, AS IN SEANTE. UP THREW VERBAL

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BOUQUETS AT SOFT- LINER SANHUEZA FOR HIS " EVEN- HANDED"
STEWARDSHIP.

4. COMMENT. UNTIL HE RAN FOR SENATE, FREI STROVE TO KEEP WELL BEHIND THE SCENES. PDC PONDERED AT LENGTH ITS DECISION TO ELEVATE FREI TO PRESTIGIOUS SENATE POST (AS LARGEST PARTY BOTH CHAMBERS, PDC' S WILL IS DETERMINING). FREI AND PARTY EVIDENTLY AGREED THIS DISTINCTION WOULD BE SUITABLE PUBLIC RATIFICATION OF PDC AND OPPOSITION SOLIDARITY WITH HIM IN FACE SEVERE PERSONAL ATTACKS OF RECENT MONTHS. ACCORDING PDC SOURCES, PARTY ALSO REASONED THAT SENATE PRESIDENCY WOULD HELP SHIELD FREI SOMEWHAT FROM TUMULT OF PARLIAMENTARY INFIGHTING, LESSEN RISKS OF DIMMING HIS " STATESMAN" LUSTRE. DISCARDED ALTERNATIVE WOULD HAVE BEEN FOR FREI TO HAVE MADE ONLY TOKEN SEANTE APPEARANCES. BY VIRTUE HIS STATUE AND NEW RESPONSIBILITIES, HOWEVER, FREI WILL BE LOGICAL SPOKESMAN FOR LEGISLATIVE BRANCH IN ITS DEEPENDING CONFLICT (E. G. OVER THREE AREAS DISPUTE AND ITS CONSTITUTIONAL RAMIFICATIONS) WITH EXECUTIVE. UNTIL PRESENT, ALLENDE AND FREI HAVE SHIED AWAY FROM DIRECT CLASHES. NEW CIRCUMSTANCES SEEM ASSURE HEADBUTTING SOONER OR LATER BETWEEN CHILE' S TWO MOST POPULAR PUBLIC FIGURES.

5. FOR FIRST TIME SINCE ALLENDE TOOK OFFICE CHAMBER OF DEPTS LEADERSHIP REPRESENTS THREE OF FOUR OPPOSITIONPARTIES. ON PAST OCCASIONS IN BOTH HOUSES, PDC EITHER NEGOTIATED JOINT SLATES WITH UP PARTIES OR RAN ALONE WITH UP BACKING.
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